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Seventieth year

Letter dated 25 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, the most serious international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, have been committed in the course of the ongoing aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Twenty-three years ago, an unprecedented massacre was committed against the Azerbaijani population in the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On the night of 25 to 26 February 1992, the Armenian armed forces invaded and ruined the town of Khojaly.

As a result of this act of genocide, 613 peaceful residents were murdered and 1,275 were taken hostage. The fate of 150 of them is still unknown. More than 1,000 people were disabled by bullet wounds; 83 children, 106 women and 70 elderly people were among the killed; and 78 of the mutilated were minors, boys and girls. Six families were murdered to the last man, 25 children lost both parents and 130 children lost one parent; 56 men were burned alive.

The level of brutality in Khojaly is shocking, and atrocities included scalping, beheading, bayoneting of pregnant women and the mutilation of bodies. The facts confirm that the intentional slaughter of the civilians in Khojaly was directed at their mass extermination only because they were Azerbaijanis. By committing this appalling

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crime, its perpetrators also had a purpose, to strike terror into the hearts of people and create fear before the horrifying massacre. Indeed, Khojaly was chosen as a stage for further aggression against and occupation and ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijani territories.

Apart from the considerable information in the possession of the law enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan, the responsibility of Armenia, as well as its political and military leadership and subordinate local armed groups for the crimes committed in Khojaly has been reported, recognized and documented by numerous international mass media organizations, human rights organizations, independent sources and eyewitnesses to the tragedy.

But above all, the Republic of Armenia's responsibility for the crime in Khojaly has been admitted by Armenia itself, by its high-ranking officials and the country's public sources.

The following from the interview of President of Armenia, Mr. Sargsyan, to the British journalist Thomas de Waal leave no doubt as to the question of the perpetrator of the crime in Khojaly:

> "Before Khojali, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype]".[1]

According to the Armenian author Markar Melkonian, who dedicated his book to his brother, the well-known international terrorist Monte Melkonian, who personally took part in the assault on Khojaly, the town "had been a strategic goal, but it had also been an act of revenge".[2]

Melkonian particularly mentions the role of the fighters of the two Armenian military detachments, "Arabo" and "Aramo", and describes in detail how they butchered the peaceful inhabitants of Khojaly. Thus, as he puts it, some inhabitants of the town had almost made it to safety, after fleeing for nearly six miles, when "[Armenian] soldiers had chased them down". The soldiers, in his words, "unsheathed the knives they had carried on their hips for so long, and began stabbing".[3]

No comments.

The date of 26 February was proclaimed as Day of Khojaly Genocide and National Mourning by the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The people of Azerbaijan will never forget the Khojaly tragedy and will continue the legitimate pursuit of justice until it prevails.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 38, 64, 66, 68, 82 and 83, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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[1] Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York and London, 2004), p. 172.

[2] Markar Melkonian, *My Brother's Road: An American's Fateful Journey to Armenia* (London and New York, 2005), p. 214.

[3] Ibid., pp. 213 and 214.